

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 313672

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PARM, NATO, MBFR

SUBJECT: MBFR: GUIDANCE FOR TRILATERAL MEETING SEPT. 23

THIS CABLE IS A REPEAT OF STATE 235251 (DTG 222331Z SEP 76).

1. THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED AS GUIDANCE FOR US OFFICIALS IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH UK AND FRG OFFICIALS ON SEPT. 23.

2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN THE US VIEW, THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT MEETING WITH THE UK AND FRG IS TO WORK OUT A POSITION TO DEAL WITH FRENCH OBJECTIONS WITHOUT SACRIFICING ESSENTIAL ALLIED GOALS IN MBFR. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER ISSUES WHICH MIGHT ALSO BE USEFULLY DISCUSSED WITH THE UK AND FRG ON THIS OCCASION. THESE ARE DEALT WITH IN PARAS 5-7; HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT MEETING THEY ARE SECONDARY TO THE PROBLEM OF REMOVING THE OBSTACLE TO A DATA DISCUSSION WITH THE EAST AND ALSO OF CONSIDERING HOW THE INITIAL STEPS OF SUCH A DISCUSSION MIGHT PROCEED.

3. THE FRENCH PROBLEM.

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WE WOULD BE WILLING TO WORK OUT AD REFERENDUM A UK-FRG-US PAPER DURING THE PRESENT MEETING WHICH, FOLLOWING ANY NECESSARY DISCUSSION

WITH THE ALLIES, COULD BE GIVEN TO THE FRENCH AND SUBSEQUENTLY SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR NATO GUIDANCE.

--IN OUR VIEW SUCH A PAPER MIGHT MOST USEFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY BE GIVEN TO THE FRENCH IN CONJUNCTION WITH A HIGH-

LEVEL APPROACH (I.E., AT THE FOREIGN OR PRIME MINISTER LEVEL) RATHER THAN AT THE WORKING LEVEL. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR THE FRG TO TAKE THE LEAD, AND CONSIDER THAT THE US AND THE UK COULD FOLLOW-UP AS APPROPRIATE. WE WOULD OF COURSE DEFER TO GERMAN PREFERENCES AS TO THE LEVEL OF INITIAL APPROACH.

--WE BELIEVE THE TRIPARTITE PARTIES SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER TO OFFER TO DROP THE FRENCH FROM THE DATA PRESENTATION, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE BELGIAN APPROACH. WE WOULD VIEW THIS AS A MEANS OF GAINING FRENCH ACQUIESCENCE TO THE WEST'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMON CEILING BY CONTINUING TO INCLUDE FRENCH FORCES IN IT. WE WOULD OF COURSE DEFER TO GERMAN PREFERENCES AS TO HOW SUCH A CONCESSION MIGHT BE OFFERED.

--IF IT IS DECIDED THAT THE PAPER GIVEN TO THE FRENCH SHOULD PROPOSE THE EXCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES FROM THE DATA BASE, PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER ALLIES WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE NEEDED. US DELEGATION SHOULD WORK WITH THE UK AND FRG TO DETERMINE HOW THIS MIGHT BEST BE DONE. WE BELIEVE THE FRG SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OTHER ALLIES AND ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE FRG APPROACH IN OUR OWN CONTACTS.

--PARTICIPANTS SHOULD ALSO DISCUSS HOW THE TABLING OF REVISED DATA WITHOUT THE FRENCH WOULD AFFECT WESTERN PRE-S

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SENTATION OF THE COMMON CEILING; AND HOW THE FRENCH MIGHT BEST BE REASSURED THAT THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT DOES NOT CONSTRAIN FRENCH FREEDOM OF ACTION.

--PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRILATERAL MEETING SHOULD DISCUSS HOW THE EXCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES WOULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE EAST. IN PARTICULAR, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD DISCUSS HOW THE EAST WOULD BE ASSURED THAT THE CHANGE IN THE COVERAGE OF NATO DATA DOES NOT AFFECT THE SIZE OF THE MANPOWER REDUCTIONS ENVISIONED BY THE WEST OR THE VALIDITY OF OUR PROPOSED COMMON CEILING CONCEPT.

--PARTICIPANTS ARE ALSO AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS WITHOUT COMMITMENT ALTERNATE WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE FRENCH PROBLEM IN THE EVENT THAT AN APPROACH BASED ON A TRIPARTITE APPROVED PAPER ALONG THE LINES DISCUSSED ABOVE DOES NOT TAKE PLACE OR IS UNSUCCESSFUL.

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4. DATA AND DEFINITION DISCUSSION.

--WE CONSIDER THAT ANY DATA AND DEFINITION DISCUSSIONS SHOULD FOCUS FIRST ON OBTAINING EASTERN EXPLANATIONS OF THE

COUNTING RULES USED IN DEVELOPING THE EASTERN DATA. THIS WOULD ESTABLISH THE NECESSARY FACTUAL BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

--ONCE THE WEST HAS LEARNED AS MUCH AS THE EAST IS WILLING TO PROVIDE ON EASTERN COUNTING RULES, THE WEST MIGHT THEN WISH TO RETURN DISCUSSIONS TO THE DATA ASPECT. AS THE UK HAS SUGGESTED, WESTERN NEGOTIATORS MIGHT ASK THE EAST TO QUANTIFY THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONNEL EXCLUDED FROM THEIR DATA UNDER THEIR COUNTING RULES, BUT INCLUDED UNDER WESTERN COUNTING RULES.

--AT THE SAME TIME, WE THINK IT OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE  
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NOT TO LET THE DISCUSSION DEVELOP ALONG LINES WHICH WOULD LEAD TO POINTLESS CONFRONTATION, WITH EAST AND WEST CHALLENGING EACH OTHER'S GOOD FAITH.

--AS FAR AS THE SEQUENCE OF A DATA DISCUSSION GOES, WE APPEAR TO BE IN SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT WITH THE INITIAL STEPS OUTLINED IN THE UK PAPER. AS REGARDS THE SUBSEQUENT STAGES (PARAS 8-11 OF THE UK PAPER), WE DO NOT FEEL WE HAVE YET REACHED THE POINT WHERE DECISIONS CAN BE MADE. HOWEVER WE WOULD BE WILLING TO EXPLORE FURTHER WITH THE UK AND FRG POSSIBLE LINES FOR DEVELOPING A DATA DISCUSSION.

--IN OUR VIEW, A FULL-FLEDGED SPC DISCUSSION OF MODALITIES OF A DATA DISCUSSION WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE AT THIS TIME, SINCE IT WOULD INEVITABLY ENTAIL OPEN DISCUSSION OF THOSE ISSUES OF GREATEST SENSITIVITY TO THE FRENCH. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER DEFINITIONS DISCUSSION IN VIENNA NEED NOT NECESSARILY AWAIT RESOLUTION OF THE FRENCH PROBLEM AND THAT TRIPARTITE PARTIES SHOULD CONSIDER HOW TO PRESS THE EAST MOST EFFECTIVELY TO EXPLAIN THE EASTERN COUNTING RULES IN THE ABSENCE OF REVISED WESTERN DATA.

##### 5. TABLING OF RED DATA.

--WE ARE OPPOSED TO ALLIED NEGOTIATORS TABLING THEIR REVISED DATA ON PACT MANPOWER IN THE REDUCTIONS AREA AT THE SAME TIME THEY PUT DOWN REVISED DATA FOR NATO MANPOWER.

--ALTHOUGH WE WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WISH TO FORECLOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF TABLING OUR ESTIMATES ON PACT MANPOWER AT SOME LATER POINT IN A DATA DISCUSSION, A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS WOULD ARGUE IN FAVOR OF DEFERRING A DECISION TO TABLE

INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES OF PACT MANPOWER AT THIS TIME.

--WE HAVE ALREADY TOLD THE EAST THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFI-  
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CANT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN EASTERN DATA AND OUR ESTIMATES OF PACT MANPOWER. THERE IS NO NEED TO SEEK TO ESTABLISH FURTHER PRECISION OR TO RAISE UNNECESSARY CONTENTION ABOUT THIS POINT, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE WANT THE EAST TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE IN EXPLAINING ITS COUNTING RULES.

--MANY OF THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF COUNTERING EASTERN DATA WITH NATO ESTIMATES OF PACT MANPOWER WHICH WERE MADE AT THE TIME THE EAST TABLED ITS DATA SEEM LESS VALID NOW. THE EAST HAS NOT LAUNCHED A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN THE WESTERN MEDIA IN SUPPORT OF ITS ESTIMATES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REFER TO THE ESTIMATES OF PACT MANPOWER THAT WE TABLED IN 1973 IN SUPPORT OF OUR POSITION.

--THE POSSIBILITY OF STILL FURTHER CHANGES IN WESTERN INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES ON PACT FORCES MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO PUT DOWN A FIGURE AT THE OUTSET WHICH CAN BE REGARDED AS UNASSIABLE. GENERALLY, FROM A TACTICAL AND INTELLIGENCE POSITION, IT IS BETTER IF WE PROVIDE DATA ON OUR OWN FORCES AND ONLY COMMENT IN GENERAL TERMS ON EASTERN CATEGORIES OF FORCES AND DATA.

--TABLING OUR ESTIMATE OF PACT MANPOWER WOULD GIVE THE EAST THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHIFT THE FOCUS OF THE DISCUSSION FROM DATA THEY HAVE TABLED ON PACT MANPOWER TO OUR DATA ON PACT MANPOWER. IT COULD FURTHER LEAD TO THE SITUATION WHEREBY WE FIND OURSELVES DEFENDING OUR ESTIMATE ON EASTERN MANPOWER TO THE EAST, AS OPPOSED TO THEIR DEFENDING THEIR COUNTING RULES AND DATA.

--IF WE TABLE RED DATA COMPILED ACCORDING TO WESTERN COUNTING RULES, THE EAST MAY RESPOND BY TABLING BLUE DATA BASED ON THEIR COUNTING RULES WHICH THE WEST WOULD PROBABLY FIND UNACCEPTABLE, THUS DIVERTING DISCUSSION TO WESTERN RATHER THAN EASTERN FORCES. EASTERN DATA ON NATO FORCES MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, INCLUDE THE FRG RESERVES.

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6. VERIFICATION. (TO BE USED ONLY IF THE ISSUE IS RAISED BY THE UK OR FRG.)

--GIVEN THE RELATIONSHIP OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE VERIFICATION ISSUE TO THOSE ISSUES WHICH HAVE PROVED TO BE OF GREATEST SENSITIVITY TO FRANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DATA-COMMON CEILING PROBLEM, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO DEFER INITIATING ALLIED DISCUSSIONS OF VERIFICATION.

--THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR VIEWS ON VERIFICATION AS OUTLINED IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS AND EXCHANGES WITH THE UK AND FRG HAS

NOT CHANGED. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE ALLIED INTEREST TO PRESENT A WESTERN POSITION ON VERIFICATION IN VIENNA AT AN EARLY DATE.

7. FRG NON-PAPER (CONTINGENCY USE ONLY).

--WE BELIEVE THE CONCEPT OF THREE IMPLEMENTING STAGES OUTLINED IN THE FRG NON-PAPER OF JUNE 1976 IS POTENTIALLY USEABLE IN THE EVENT THAT THE EAST ADMITS TO THE EXISTENCE OF AN EAST-WEST DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES ON THE ORDER OF THAT SHOWN BY WESTERN ESTIMATES.

--THE FRG NON-PAPER APPEARS TO ENVISAGE A SINGLE AGREEMENT. THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, DIFFER FROM THE PRESENT ALLIED APPROACH. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE ADDITIONAL FRG REASONING.

8. US REDUCTIONS BY UNITS.

THE WESTERN POSITION IS THAT US REDUCTIONS CAN BE BY UNIT OR INDIVIDUALS. WE NOW FEEL THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE US MILITARY PERSONNEL TO BE WITHDRAWN UNDER A PHASE I AGREEMENT WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IN THE FORM OF UNITS (INCLUDING COMBAT UNITS). SINCE THE EAST HAS REPEATEDLY CHARGED THAT  
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THE US IS OFFERING ONLY REDUCTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN RETURN FOR A REDUCTION OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY--AN ACCUSATION WHICH ACCURATELY REFLECTS NEITHER THE NATO MBFR POSITION NOR THE PROBABLE COMPOSITION OF THE US REDUCTION PACKAGE--WE BELIEVE THIS POINT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR TO THE EAST.

--IN OUR VIEW, INFORMING THE EAST IN A LOW-KEY WAY THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE US MILITARY PERSONNEL TO BE WITHDRAWN UNDER THE PHASE I AGREEMENT WOULD BE IN THE FORM OF UNITS AND WOULD PROBABLY INCLUDE COMBAT UNITS WOULD REPRESENT AN INFORMAL CLARIFICATION OF AN ALLIED POSITION TO THE EAST. THE COMPOSITION OF THE US REDUCTION PACKAGE WILL NECESSARILY BE DECIDED BY THE US. SINCE THIS POSITION REPRESENTS SOME CHANGE IN THE ALLIED POSITION, HOWEVER, WE WILL UNDERTAKE FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER ALLIES. THE US DELEGATION SHOULD SEEK UK AND FRG VIEWS ON POSSIBLE MODALITIES FOR SUCH CONSULTATION.

--FOLLOWING IS PROPOSED TEXT FOR USE BY US DEL IN INFORMING EAST: BEGIN TEXT: "THE WESTERN POSITION HAS BEEN THAT THE US RETAINS THE RIGHT TO DESIGNATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH ITS WITHDRAWALS WILL BE MADE AS INDIVIDUALS OR TAKE THE FORM OF UNITS IN PARTIAL RECOGNITION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITY.

THIS REMAINS THE WESTERN POSITION. HOWEVER, EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD BE AWARE THAT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER,

THE MAJORITY OF US MILITARY PERSONNEL TO BE WITHDRAWN UNDER A PHASE I AGREEMENT WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IN THE FORM OF UNITS AND THAT THESE WOULD LIKELY INCLUDE COMBAT UNITS. REGARDLESS OF THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE PHASE I US MANPOWER REDUCTIONS, THE WEST DOES NOT ENVISAGE LIMITATION ON THE RESIDUAL NUMBER OF US UNITS. MOREOVER, PHASE I WITHDRAWAL OF SOME US PERSONNEL IN THE FORM OF UNITS WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE A PRECEDENT FOR WESTERN REDUCTIONS IN PHASE II."

END TEXT.

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--IN INFORMING THE EAST, WE WANT TO AVOID ANY CONNOTATION FOR THE TERM "UNITS" THAT WOULD IMPLY THAT ONLY LARGE-SIZED UNITS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN. WE WANT TO RETAIN THE FLEXIBILITY TO INCLUDE SMALL UNITS IN THE US WITHDRAWAL.

HABIB  
ROBINSON

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